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President: Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea)
later: Mr. Shava (Vice-President) (Zimbabwe)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 5: High-level segment (*continued*)
(E/2016/33, E/2016/64 and E/2016/70)

Statement by the Secretary-General

1. **The Secretary-General** said that, as the global central platform for follow-up and review of the Sustainable Development Goals, the high-level political forum on sustainable development depended on the active support and participation of the Economic and Social Council, the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council, Member States and major groups.

2. In recent months, he had listened to many people, including refugees, youth and children, indigenous people, persons with disabilities and women entrepreneurs, and had heard a common message: the Sustainable Development Goals represented their hope for a better future. They were an action plan for people, planet, peace and prosperity. In an interconnected world, the Sustainable Development Goals were universal and indivisible.

3. That very day, he was launching the first report on the Sustainable Development Goals, which was based on official data provided on the indicators developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and agreed by Member States. The *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2016* would provide a key benchmark throughout the implementation period of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and provided an accurate evaluation of where the world stood on the 17 Goals, using data currently available to highlight the most significant gaps and challenges.

4. The latest data showed that about one person in eight still lived in extreme poverty; nearly 800 million people suffered from hunger; the births of nearly a quarter of children under 5 had not been recorded; 1.1 billion people were living without electricity; and water scarcity affected more than 2 billion people. The data also underscored the imperative of targeted action in support of those who were furthest behind. For the Agenda to be fully implemented, those who were furthest behind would have to be reached first, which would not be possible without data and indicators on all groups, especially those that were often unaccounted for. Coordinated efforts worldwide would be indispensable to supply reliable and timely data for systematic follow-up and progress reviews.

5. The Sustainable Development Goals addressed the critical challenges of modern times. One challenge that called for immediate action was climate change. Every day, the headlines spoke of more climate-related disasters: mass coral bleaching on the Great Barrier Reef, soaring temperatures in the Arctic, wildfires, multi-year droughts and floods. In April 2016, a record number of Member States had signed the Paris Agreement on climate change, which needed to be brought into force that year. To help advance that process, he would convene an event on 21 September 2016 for countries to deposit their instruments of ratification. Of the 178 countries that had signed this Paris Agreement, 19 countries had deposited their instrument of ratification. Those 19 countries accounted for less than 1 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions. For the Agreement to enter into force, 55 countries accounting for 55 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions needed to ratify the Agreement. He very much encouraged the at least 40 countries which had made a commitment to ratify the Agreement before the end of 2016. It would be much better and more desirable for the Agreement to enter into force before the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Marrakech in November 2016, or at least by the end of December 2016, in order to accelerate the process of implementing the Agreement. Without any doubt, tackling climate change was essential for sustainable development. The actions needed to reduce emissions and build climate resilience were the very same as those needed to lay the foundation for prosperity and security for all and set the world on a sustainable footing for generations to come.

6. The voluntary national reviews would be a key feature of the 2016 forum. He commended the 22 countries that had submitted their reports voluntarily to present what their Governments and societies were doing to implement the 2030 Agenda. Progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals would be greatly enhanced by making sure that lessons were shared and best practices replicated. He called on Member States to intensify efforts at follow-up and review through a participatory process, with the full engagement of the business sector and civil society, and pledged the full support of the United Nations family in that undertaking.

7. The 2030 Agenda required a stronger, better-integrated and more strategic United Nations development system. The United Nations Development Group had been actively engaged in making that happen. An independent team of advisors had recently offered the Economic and Social Council a vision of a stronger system working as one. He trusted that all would benefit from that bold diagnostic work and consider their wide range of proposals. National Governments, local authorities, business, civil society and the United Nations must all learn how to think differently and transform policies and strategies to address the challenges of sustainability. Targeted policies, active outreach and disaggregated information to inform decision-making were needed in order to reach the poor and vulnerable. The multiple dimensions of poverty and vulnerability and how they interconnected needed to be recognized and understood. Silos needed to be broken down, not only between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development, but also between government institutions, between different levels of government and between the public and private sectors.

8. Member States had pledged in the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind; everyone should be on board. Important steps had already been taken: the Technology Facilitation Mechanism was being implemented; the first multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals had been held; the Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up had been inaugurated; the *Global Sustainable Development Report* had been published; the fourteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development was under way, focusing on going from decisions to actions; and preparations for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) were at an advanced stage.

9. He urged Member States, the United Nations family and major groups to accelerate momentum. Comprehensive financing and broad, inclusive and innovative partnerships were needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. He looked forward to the Development Cooperation Forum on 21 and 22 July, as part of the high-level segment of the Council. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development had provided a holistic framework for mobilizing resources and aligning all financing flows with sustainable development. Every effort should be made to meet the official development assistance (ODA) targets and improve the quality of official development assistance. South-South cooperation should also continue to complement traditional development assistance and cooperation flows.

10. Over his past nine and a half years as Secretary-General, he had given top priority to laying the foundations for a sustainable future for the planet and its people. He was grateful for the Council's strong support, and engagement and leadership. Member States were off to a good start and should pledge never to rest until a world of peace, dignity and opportunity for all was achieved.

11. *The meeting was suspended at 3.20 p.m. for the presentation of voluntary national reviews under the high-level political forum, convened under the auspices of the Council, and resumed at 5.35 p.m.*

12. *Mr. Shava (Zimbabwe), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

Introductory statements

13. **Mr. Wu** Hongbo (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on implementing the post-2015 development agenda: moving from commitments to results (E/2016/64) and the note by the Secretary-General on infrastructure for sustainable development for all (E/2016/70), said that delivering the Sustainable Development Goals would require policy integration and maximizing of synergies across the economic, social and environmental dimensions. To move from commitments to results, knowledge must be shared and experiences exchanged at all levels. Significant policy and institutional shifts would be essential for advancing implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Development actors at all levels would need to strengthen integration, embrace innovation and pursue inclusive partnerships to ensure results on sustainable development. Implementation of the Agenda should be country-based, complemented by regional and global actions.

14. Infrastructure was fundamental to sustainable development. Properly planned and implemented infrastructure was a prerequisite for advances across all Goals and targets. The 2016 thematic discussion of the

Council, informed by the note of the Secretary-General, offered an important contribution to a new, inclusive global dialogue on sustainable infrastructure to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The current global environment was likely to affect the early phases of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. According to the mid-2016 update of the *World Economic Situation and Prospects*, weak global growth continued to linger; there was little prospect for a broad-based turnaround by the end of the year; and continued weak investment and slow productivity growth would likely challenge the longer-term potential of the global economy. Global leaders would need to address economic growth prospects for effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Global leaders were also confronting the challenge of bringing together the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development, and translating them into coherent policy frameworks for sustainable development. For example, in the area of climate change, the 2016 *World Economic and Social Survey* had concluded that policies to build climate resilience would need to address the root causes of poverty and vulnerability.

15. **Mr. Ocampo** (Chair, Committee for Development Policy), introducing the report of the Committee for Development Policy on its eighteenth session (E/2016/33), said that the Committee for Development Policy had decided to focus on the question of expanding the productive capacity of the least developed countries to enable them to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals for its input to the 2016 inaugural session of the high-level political forum and its contribution to the thematic discussion of the Council. Goals 8 and 9 referred directly to productive capacity, and the interlinkages with other Goals were clear: meeting certain Goals and targets — for example, on health and nutrition, institutions and energy — might contribute to increasing productive capacity, while building productive capacity would impact on a number of Goals and targets, including gender equality, employment, income growth and natural resources. Expanding productive capacity and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals required an integrated approach to development at both the national and international levels.

16. Priority in granting international support should be given to the least developed countries, which had lower productive capacity and limited resources and capabilities for expanding them. Such support must be designed so as to leverage national-level efforts to ensure that no one was left behind at the national level.

17. Least developed countries were unlikely to meet the Sustainable Development Goals without structural transformations to their economies. New policies at the domestic and international levels were required to support dynamic transformation that was to the benefit of all, in particular disadvantaged groups. Industrial policies in particular could play an important role in expanding productivity, especially when combined with competition policies. Policies aimed at increasing the technical skills of the labour force, raising investments in infrastructure and improving coordination between the public and private sectors were also appropriate. Vertical industrial policies, including tariffs, export promotion polices, tax holidays and sector-specific infrastructure provision, could be adopted to support specific firms or industries. Horizontal industrial policies could be adopted to support government, industry and private organizations in increasing productivity through research and development, technology transfer, quality standard regulations and business incubators. Foreign direct investment could be an important vehicle for industrial and technological upgrading in least developed countries, but required parallel development of local capabilities in order to harness production linkages and promote local value creation. Least developed countries also needed to ensure that their macroeconomic and financial policies supported expanding capacities and ensured a fair distribution of benefits within their societies.

18. To implement those policies, Governments of least developed countries needed to build development governance capabilities, including strong institutions to guarantee the implementation of sound macroeconomic and financial frameworks, and ensure food security. Regional cooperation and integration could also play a catalytic role in implementing those policies. International support measures, such as preferential market access and aid for trade, needed to be enhanced and could contribute to increasing exports and achieving the broader set of Sustainable Development Goals.

19. The Committee for Development Policy called upon the Governments of least developed countries to design and implement strategies that aimed to accelerate economic growth and promote dynamic

transformation of their economies. Potential trade-offs and the harnessing of synergies between increasing productive capacity and other sustainable development objectives should be incorporated into such strategies. The international community should strengthen support measures in favour of least developed countries, with a focus on supporting structural transformation. For example, preferential market access for least developed countries should be retained and enhanced, and aid-for-trade allocations should target countries most in need. The international community should also strengthen international tax cooperation to guarantee that foreign investors made an adequate contribution to tax revenue in least developed countries. Adequate action needed to be taken to avert illicit capital flows associated with tax evasion.

20. The Committee had also made a number of recommendations to the Council with the aim of making a clear distinction between ODA and total official support for sustainable development, a new measure of broader development financing resources proposed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). In particular, it was recommending that the Council reiterate the call to donors to meet their ODA commitments and for ODA to be reported separately from other flows, such as climate financing and market-like instruments; that development assistance, a cross-border transaction by nature, should not include expenditure within the borders of donor countries (for example on refugee resettlement); that private financial flows should be counted separately from ODA expenditure; and that Member States, particularly developing countries and new providers, should be involved in all deliberations on any new framework for financing for development. The Committee for Development Policy believed that the Council should be the organ to facilitate the debate on that issue, particularly through the Development Cooperation Forum. He hoped that the upcoming high-level panel discussion, organized jointly by the Committee for Development Policy and OECD, would advance discussion on that topic.

(a) Ministerial meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Council *(continued)*

General debate (continued)

21. **The President** invited the ministerial meeting to resume its general debate on the theme "Ensuring that no one is left behind".

22. **Ms. Power** (United States of America), Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations and Member of the Cabinet of President Obama, said that the United States had made significant efforts, both within the country and abroad, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. However, there were three key areas where all countries could and must do better.

23. First, the data on relative progress towards reaching the Goals must be made more transparent and more accessible, and must be used to adapt and improve public policies. For example, in the United States, where approximately one-third of food was wasted each year at the consumer and retail levels, data could be used to pinpoint the sources of food waste in order to help reduce it in keeping with target 12.3. The United States was committed to establishing a transparent, publicly accessible online platform tracking its progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, and it urged other countries to do the same.

24. Second, acknowledging and speaking openly about shortfalls was an essential first step towards remedying chronic deficiencies and gaps in opportunity. For example, more than 60 million Americans qualified for free civil legal assistance, but over half of those who sought it were turned away by legal aid organizations that lacked the funds and staff to take on their cases. Knowing that equal access to justice was critical to defending many human rights, the United States was working to fill that and other gaps in access to justice in line with Goal16. The voluntary national reviews were one of many ways to evaluate implementation efforts.

25. Third, a diverse range of stakeholders must be involved in working to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. An example of how that could work was the Open Government Partnership, which brought together Governments and civil societies from 70 countries around the world to share innovative

strategies in tackling many of the key drivers of poverty and inequality, such as corruption.

26. Despite the essential role of civil society, many Member States continued to view civil society groups as adversaries and were taking steps to suppress rather than empower them. In May, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations had blocked the application of the Committee to Protect Journalists, an impartial organization that promoted press freedom and defended the right of journalists worldwide to report the news without fear of reprisal. That same month, a group of Member States had blocked more than 20 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from participating in a high-level HIV/AIDS meeting, simply because of their advocacy work on the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. Space must be guarded for civil society, both within individual countries and at the United Nations, in order to have any hope of accomplishing the Sustainable Development Goals.

27. **Mr. Zaorálek** (Czech Republic), Minister for Foreign Affairs, said that the implementation process of the 2030 Agenda was well on track in the Czech Republic. A new Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development, fully reflecting the new global framework, was currently under preparation and should be completed by the end of 2016. Ministries, State and non-State institutions, civil society, business and academia had been participating in numerous round tables, sharing good practices and discussing challenges and the overall shaping of a sustainable future for the Czech Republic.

28. In order to take account of the 2030 Agenda, his Ministry had been tasked with putting greater emphasis on the social dimension of foreign policy with human dignity at its core. The new Development Cooperation Strategy of the Czech Republic, which would come into effect in 2018, would fully respect the principle of leaving no one behind, include a stronger focus on the least developed countries and cover most of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. It focused on five priority areas: good governance and strengthened democracy; sustainable management of natural resources; sustainable economic growth; agriculture and rural development; and inclusive social development. In November 2016, the Czech Republic would host a high-level regional conference as part of the global effort under the "Future of Work" initiative of the International Labour Organization. Ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls both domestically and internationally was a priority of his Government. He had personally supported the HeForShe initiative of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

29. Two weeks previously, his Government had approved increased funding for bilateral development cooperation, which should now grow on a yearly basis. It also made voluntary financial contributions to the initiatives it supported. The Czech Republic had recently chaired the first-ever Regional Implementation Forum on Sustainable Development, organized under the auspices of the Economic Commission for Europe. It had consistently supported the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the European Union. Recently, it had actively participated in a public consultation on a new European Consensus on Development. At the global level, it had sought to play an active role in the implementation process of the 2030 Agenda by becoming a member of the Economic and Social Council.

30. **Mr. Li** Baodong (China), Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, said that all the issues the modern world was wrestling with — from poverty alleviation to climate change — could be traced back to the root cause of inadequate development and could only be addressed through development. Joint efforts must be made in several areas in order to translate the objectives and guidelines of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into outcomes and actions. First, countries should build a strong sense of "community of common destiny" and adhere to the Charter of the United Nations to build a peaceful, stable and harmonious environment for cooperation at the regional and international levels and overcome local conflicts. The international community should also promote an open and inclusive world economy and give developing countries a greater voice in international economic governance. Second, the principle of a people-centred approach should be upheld so that all individuals could participate in sustainable development, thus ultimately ensuring that more people benefited from it and that no one was left behind. Third, planning for economic, social and environmental progress should be better coordinated, and countries should identify their priorities in those areas on the basis of their own national circumstances and stage of development. Precedence should be given

to poverty eradication, optimization of economic structures, ecological civilization and coexistence between humans and nature. Fourth, global development partnerships should be deepened. While national Governments should shoulder the primary responsibility for implementing the 2030 Agenda, the private sector, civil society and charitable organizations should also be encouraged to participate fully. Measures should be taken to reduce the gap between North and South and rich and poor, and developed countries should honour their ODA commitments. Fifth, the United Nations, which played a central role in improving global cooperation, should better coordinate development, security and human rights, and mobilize other international organizations specializing in economics, finance, trade and investment.

31. As the holder of the 2016 presidency of the Group of 20 (G-20), China had formulated several initiatives and plans to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda as well as industrialization in African and least developed countries. It had also invited an unprecedented number of developing countries to participate in the year-round activities of the G-20, and multilateral and regional organizations (such as the United Nations and the African Union, respectively) to participate in sideline dialogues. It was confident that its 2016 Summit, to be held in Hangzhou, would leave an indelible mark on global development.

32. **Mr. Tiilikainen** (Finland), Minister of Agriculture and the Environment, said that while the exact nature of the challenges and opportunities associated with sustainable development varied between States, the essential aim of caring for fellow human beings was a common objective. It was too early to review the results of efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda, but it should be noted that many States had already put in place plans and processes for ambitious implementation at the national level. In that connection, his country was pleased to have had the opportunity to present its voluntary nation review to the high-level political forum.

33. The United Nations Environment Assembly had undertaken to contribute to the effective implementation of the environmental aspects of the 2030 Agenda in an integrated manner and take the necessary steps to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 12 on sustainable consumption and production patterns. Efforts to achieve sustainable development must respect the Paris Agreement on climate change and involve both collective action to combat climate change and the integration of intended nationally determined contributions into national development strategies.

34. Finnish development policy and cooperation were governed by the 2030 Agenda and placed particular emphasis on the rights of women and girls and strengthening the economies of developing countries with a view to promoting livelihoods and well-being. Other priority areas included democracy; access to food, water and energy; and the sustainable use of natural resources.

35. To fulfil its mandate, the high-level political forum must send a strong message to Member States, stakeholders and the United Nations system on how to boost the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The ministerial declaration of the session would have an important role to play in that regard. The high-level political forum must carry out its follow-up and review functions in an effective manner in the coming years. That would require an operational global indicator framework, timely and robust data for measuring global progress, and the collection of disaggregated data to ensure that no one was left behind.

36. **Mr. Shekarabi** (Sweden), Minister for Public Administration, said that his country was committed to ensuring that no was left behind, in Sweden and around the world. To ensure the bold political leadership that would be required to achieve that aim, Sweden had taken the initiative to establish a high-level group comprising the Prime Minister of Sweden and eight other world leaders to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Sweden reaffirmed its commitment to the high-level forum on sustainable development as the central forum for the follow-up and review of commitments under the 2030 Agenda.

37. In implementing Agenda 21: Programme of Action for Sustainable Development, Sweden had learned that action at the local level was essential to ensuring the inclusivity of the development processes. Therefore, all county and municipal governments had been made responsible for areas across the three dimensions of sustainable development. His Government had established a national multi-stakeholder committee to support implementation and provide outreach to all sectors of society. In addition, central government

agencies had been asked to identify how their operations related to the 2030 Agenda.

38. His Government had adopted an integrated approach across all sectors to make a positive impact on climate. Its ambitious goals included a bid to become one of the world's first fossil fuel-free welfare nations. It had also launched the Global Deal for Decent Work and Inclusive Growth, and in partnership with Fiji, would host the 2017 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, on the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources. Sweden also attached great importance to gender equality and human rights, including sexual and reproductive rights and the rights of women and girls.

39. The United Nations must be equipped to support national sustainable development efforts in all countries. As a member of the Security Council for the period 2017-2018, his country would work to address the root causes of fragility and conflict and insist on women's participation at every level in efforts to build peace and prevent conflict.

40. **Ms. Baiardi Quesnel** (Paraguay), Minister for Women, said that 2015 had been a historic year, with the adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement. Her country's national development plan, which had been established in line with those international commitments, focused on poverty reduction, social development, inclusive economic development, equal opportunities and environmental sustainability. It was essential to put the necessary monitoring mechanisms in place to ensure that national policies were in line with international commitments.

41. Development would not be possible if women were excluded from the process. Leaving no woman or girl behind would require legislative changes to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women. Gender mainstreaming, physical and economic independence for women and girls, and equal participation were not only laudable ends in themselves but also essential to promote development. Democratic parity was the quickest way to establish gender equality.

42. Paraguay was committed to Sustainable Goal 17, on strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development. A global partnership uniting Governments, civil society, the private sector and the United Nations system and mobilizing all available resources was necessary to implement the 2030 Agenda. Support for developing countries, in particular those facing special challenges, should be increased to ensure equitable development.

43. **Mr. Murad** (Afghanistan), Minister of Economy, said that the presentation of 22 voluntary national reviews greatly contributed to the exchange of experiences in the high-level political forum. Building on its experience gained in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), his Government had developed a national road map for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The National Coordination Committee and a number of technical working groups comprising members of the Government, parliament, United Nations agencies, civil society and the private sector had already been established in that connection. The Afghanistan National Development Framework was focused on economic growth, poverty reduction, job creation and self-sufficiency.

44. The Brussels Conference on Afghanistan in October 2016 would build on a set of mutual commitments agreed upon by the Afghan Government and its development partners. The Conference, which was a realization of Sustainable Development Goal 17, would send a signal of hope and confidence and make it clear that the progress made by Afghanistan over the past 15 years was irreversible.

45. His Government was working closely with United Nations agencies, donors, international institutions, the private sector and civil society to mobilize the necessary means of implementation for the 2030 Agenda. The successful implementation of the Agenda in his country would require a particular focus on its specific challenges, in particular in relation to Goal 16 on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies. His delegation therefore welcomed the reference to the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States by the Group of Seven Plus in the draft ministerial declaration of the high-level political forum.

46. **Ms. Nasr** (Egypt), Minister of International Cooperation, said that her country was pleased to have presented its national voluntary report to the high-level political forum. Eliminating poverty by 2030 was a priority for her Government; it would require leveraging national, regional and global efforts and

resources and a strong commitment to leave no one behind. As development was an integral element of human rights, all persons must be able to benefit from it. The eradication of poverty would require greater economic growth and decent work for all, which could only be achieved by transforming industry and trade systems to provide developing countries with access to markets.

47. Increasing levels of terrorism around the world were creating economic, political and security challenges to sustainable development. The international community must take joint action to tackle that scourge in order to ensure prosperity for peoples around the world. It was also important to ensure that sufficient resources were devoted to addressing climate change.

48. Development challenges could only be overcome through a global partnership for sustainable development and effective means of implementation. She therefore called on the international community to fulfil its pledges and mobilize the necessary resources to help developing countries tackle problems such as the illicit flow of capital, the brain drain and gaps in scientific and technical know-how. The private sector, civil society, the academic sector and the United Nations system should all be involved in those efforts.

49. Her delegation looked forward to participating in the joint efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda, which were the only way to realize the Sustainable Development Goals and bring prosperity to current and future generations without leaving anyone behind.

50. **Mr. Kamara** (Liberia), Minister of Finance and Development Planning, said that his country had made only modest progress towards the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals owing to the protracted civil crisis it had been experiencing at the time of their adoption. His Government had therefore actively participated in the processes leading up to the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure that its unique perspective was taken into account.

51. As a fragile country that had been affected by conflict and the recent Ebola epidemic, Liberia faced significant and unique challenges in its efforts to achieve the Goals. Leaving no one behind would require focusing on both political aspects, such as reconciliation, peacebuilding and governance, and economic factors, such as unemployment and productivity. His Government was committed to adopting a coherent, inclusive, whole-of-government implementation strategy that recognized peace, security, stability, human rights, inclusion and development as the foundation for the achievement of the Goals and had already begun to implement a five-year agenda for transformation. The country's existing medium-term development plan was being reviewed with a view to bringing it in line with the 2030 Agenda and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

52. A structural transformation of the economy was under way to reduce over-reliance on natural resource extraction and ensure inclusive economic growth through economic diversification, in particular by enhancing agricultural production. His Government also intended to strengthen social protection programmes to help the poorest sectors of the population manage risks more effectively and had established an institutional framework to monitor its progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

53. **Mr. Wong Yen Cheong** (Mauritius), Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management, said that his Government had come close to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and was committed to realizing the Sustainable Development Goals. Since its independence in 1968, Mauritius had worked to put people at the centre of development, recognizing that its population was its most valuable resource, and had experienced strong economic growth as a result. Through sagacious use of official development assistance and other resources, it had been transformed from a least developed country into an upper-middle-income country. However, it had been a victim of its own success, as it now no longer qualified for official development assistance. The international community should take into account that a State's development challenges did not disappear simply because it achieved a certain level of income.

54. His Government had developed a road map to make Mauritius an upper-income country by 2030, in spite of potential obstacles such as residual poverty, rising youth unemployment rates and the increasing prevalence of non-communicable diseases. Efforts were under way to implement the strategy, but his country must continue to have access to means of implementation, including support to enhance its resilience to effects of climate change such as increasingly unpredictable and violent cyclones and

rising sea levels. A single cyclone could undo all of the country's progress in a few hours.

55. His Government was conscious of its obligations and, following broad-based consultations with the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society, had undertaken reforms to ensure that the entire revenue-earning population paid taxes. However, those locally mobilized resources would not be sufficient to finance the construction of infrastructure, develop and implement sound economic policies, establish a people-centred welfare State and sustain the standard of living that successive Governments had worked hard to establish and maintain. The Government's vision for the period up to 2030 therefore included means of increasing income from other sources, including the development of the ocean economy. The involvement of international partners in that effort would be beneficial for all parties. The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals required not only strong political will at the national level but also partnership with the global community, which could support his country by helping it to attract greater investment, offering loans on favourable terms, providing institutional capacity-building and technology transfer and assisting in the development of a regulatory framework for the Mauritian private sector.

56. His country would willingly share its experience and best practices with other countries facing similar challenges. It was also ready to partner with the United Nations development system and other donors in a system of triangular cooperation that would benefit all involved.

57. **Ms. Matondo** (Congo), Minister of Forest Economy, Sustainable Development and Environment, said that her Government was in the process of developing a national programme for the period 2017-2021, which would be in line with Agenda 2063, the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda. With the valuable support of the United Nations system, her country had made good progress on the Millennium Development Goals. Achievements included systems to provide certain medications and medical services free of charge, improved transport links, more sustainable forestry practices and the establishment of a national afforestation programme providing employment and energy for rural populations. At 36 per cent, the level of poverty remained high but was down from over 50 per cent in the early 2000s.

58. Despite the progress it had made, her country faced many challenge, including 34 per cent youth unemployment, persistent hunger and poverty, lack of sanitation services and poor access to drinking water and electricity. Her Government had drawn up a number of strategies on environmental management and sustainable development to address those problems, including forestry programmes and measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

59. **Mr. Gutiérrez Espeleta** (Costa Rica), Minister of Environment and Energy, said that his Government had established a high-level council to lead the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and was developing a short-term implementation strategy on the basis of the results of a national development plan that had been in place prior to the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals. Public policies and key actors from the public, private and academic sectors and civil society had been identified for every Goal, and work was under way to identify synergies between the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development accession process and the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development. His Government was also working with the national statistics institute to establish national indicators to monitor the Sustainable Development Goals on the basis of high-quality disaggregated data. Costa Rica was committed to the promotion of sustainable development and innovative solutions to restore hope for current and future generations.

60. Speaking in his capacity as President of the United Nations Environment Assembly, he said that the Assembly was a universal platform for ministers of environment and other major actors from around the world to work together. At its second session, in May 2016, it had discussed many pressing environmental threats that were relevant to the 2030 Agenda, including climate change, education for sustainable development, biodiversity, desertification and environmental crime, and had adopted a number of resolutions relevant to the implementation of the environmental aspects of the 2030 Agenda, including resolution 2/5, entitled "Delivering on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" outlining how the Environment Assembly and the United Nations Environment Programme would contribute to the work

of the high-level political forum. The Environment Assembly had also examined the linkages between the different dimensions of sustainable development, including the links between environmental quality and human rights, health and well-being.

61. **Mr. Wembi Loambo** (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Minister of Planning and Monitoring Implementation of the Revolution of Modernity, said that his Government had incorporated the Sustainable Development Goals into its national development plan, drawing on the lessons learned from the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. The long-term development plan was to transform the Democratic Republic of the Congo into a middle-income country by 2021 through agricultural transformation, into an emerging country by 2030 by means of intensive industrialization, and into a developed country with a knowledge economy by 2050. The development plan would be implemented through a series of five-year plans, beginning with the period 2017-2021, and would incorporate measures to combat climate change.

62. His Government's efforts to encourage the involvement of all stakeholders, including civil society, development partners and local governments, in the development planning process had made it possible to better integrate the Sustainable Development Goals and the priorities of the African Union's Agenda 2063 into its new strategic national development plan. To measure progress, the Government had developed a monitoring and evaluation guide and established a sustainable development observatory. In April, to launch the national contextualization of the Goals, it had sponsored a training programme on integrated rapid analysis for government officials, civil society, the scientific community and private-sector actors.

63. **Mr. Choi** Jongmoon (Republic of Korea), Deputy Minister for Multilateral and Global Affairs, said that despite the progress made during the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, there were still multiple challenges remaining to be addressed by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including rising inequalities, lack of decent work, demographic shifts, humanitarian crises, environmental degradation, epidemics, terrorism and violent extremism. The two most pressing obstacles to accomplishing the goal of leaving no one behind were rising inequalities both among and within countries and humanitarian crises across the globe. The richest 1 per cent of the world's population owned half of all global wealth, while the bottom half held only 1 per cent of the world's wealth. A record 65.3 million people were currently displaced against their will. Moreover, environmental changes and natural disasters across all regions impeded sustainable development and increased vulnerability.

64. Following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and efforts in Paris, Brussels and Istanbul to come up with innovative solutions for new global governance and paradigms, his delegation welcomed two upcoming meetings that would solidify global solidarity: the high-level summit to address large movements of refugees and migrants on the eve of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, followed by the Leaders' Summit on Refugees hosted by the Government of the United States.

65. To tackle rising inequalities, the Republic of Korea concentrated its resources on countries facing the most difficult circumstances, such as fragile and conflict-affected States. It planned on further increasing its contribution to country-based pooled funds. To mobilize more resources for least developed countries and fragile States, his country ran an innovative programme that collected one dollar from each flight departing from Korea and deposited the money in its Global Poverty Eradication Fund. By inducing public participation, the initiative had also raised public awareness of ODA.

66. His country made every effort to provide effective humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable groups in crisis settings, such as refugees, women and children. In particular, it supported girls' education, health and professional development in disadvantaged settings. Over the past five years, Korea had increased its humanitarian assistance for refugees tenfold. The principle of leaving no one behind was imperative and non-negotiable: if the targets of the 2030 Agenda were met but not shared by all, its accomplishments would have no legitimacy.

67. **Mr. Nguyen** The Phuong (Viet Nam), Vice-Minister of Planning and Investment, said that having successfully implemented the Millennium Development Goals, his country was turning its attention to implementing the 2030 Agenda. It had begun by reviewing existing development strategies and plans to identify the Sustainable Development Goals that were relevant to its national development priorities and aligning its indicators with the new

Goals. His country was also developing a national action plan for Sustainable Development Goal implementation which would serve as a legal framework for complying with international obligations.

68. The sustainable development process must be people-centred, both in formulation and implementation. As a lower middle-income country that was seriously affected by climate change, Viet Nam worked to ensure that its development gains were maintained. The United Nations must reach a decision on Sustainable Development Goal indicators, which would serve as the basis for the operation of a monitoring system to implement international sustainable development commitments.

69. **Mr. Gracia Aldaz** (Spain), Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, said that the 2030 Agenda was an eminently political project that called for constant, high-quality dialogue among all stakeholders. His Government had taken a number of steps to implement the 2030 Agenda at the national level, which included disseminating information to its ministries and representatives in line with the Paris Agreement and working with the National Statistics Institute on follow-up. Through policy analysis and mapping, it had taken stock of the best ways to implement the Sustainable Development Goals at the national level; more than half the indicators identified by the United Nations Statistical Commission were already being used by Spain's National Statistics Institute.

70. All means of implementation, both financial and other, should be used, while emphasizing domestic resource mobilization, the strengthening of national tax systems and fiscal policies, country presence in international trade networks, the role of information and communications technologies and innovation in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

71. **Mr. Altuwaijri** (Saudi Arabia) Vice-Minister of Economy and Planning, said that his country was taking part in many regional and international efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda, which built upon the success of the MDGs. Its national measures to implement the 2030 Agenda would contribute to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals globally. His Government had launched the national 2030 Vision and a 2020 national transitional programme, both of which included policies, programmes and initiatives to ensure the achievement of the new Goals. A royal decree had been issued to identify a body that would ensure follow up. His Government was also developing indicators to follow up national performance and a mechanism for the collection and dissemination of data. It welcomed the efforts of United Nations agencies and organs, especially the Council.

72. In the quest for sustainable development, national sovereignty, religious morals, social and cultural values, stability, peace and security must all be respected; peace and security, in particular, were threatened by the rise of terrorism and violence. The international community must act in solidarity to build peace and security, emphasizing the importance of partnership, capacity-building in developing countries, and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

73. **Mr. Nebenzya** (Russian Federation), Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, said that the Russian Federation was prepared to actively support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at all levels, in accordance with its national priorities and commitments under international agreements. Russian assistance to States in need was always aimed at addressing the most urgent issues. Such assistance was gradually expanding, amounting to $1.16 billion in 2015. Despite the fragile state of the global economy, multilateral international development assistance efforts should be reinforced as an investment in global stability and a prerequisite for creating a fair and recession-proof international system.

74. In the Russian Federation, the Inter-Agency Working Group on Climate Change and Sustainable Development was making every effort to effectively integrate the Sustainable Development Goals and related targets into national development strategies, taking into account local needs and priorities. The Federal State Statistics Service was designing a national progress tracking system for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Following parliamentary hearings held by the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, specific practical recommendations on implementing the 2030 Agenda at all levels had been adopted. Russian businesses and civil society were willing to make a significant contribution to achieving sustainable development. Public-private partnerships should continue to be

developed, and principles of corporate social responsibility favourable to the 2030 Agenda should be upheld.

75. The Russian Federation, as an active member of the Eurasian Economic Commission and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, attached particular importance to the regional dimension of the work of the United Nations system in implementing the 2030 Agenda. The Eurasian Economic Commission and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific could and should become catalysts for the "integration of integrations", or the forming of a single economic area from Lisbon to Vladivostok.

76. **Mr. Hamachi** (Japan), Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, said that in May, his country had established a headquarters under the Prime Minister to promote the Sustainable Development Goals and to coordinate efforts to contribute to the success of the 2030 Agenda. That entity would serve as a control centre to implement, monitor and review government efforts, establishing priority areas, guiding principles and follow-up mechanisms.

77. In August, Japan and African countries would convene a summit in Africa to give shape to the 2030 Agenda on the continent in three priority areas: economic diversification and industrialization, resilient health systems and societal stability. Building on efforts to date, the headquarters would further explore how to form enhanced partnerships with other stakeholders. To promote quality infrastructure investment, Japan had committed to providing US$ 200 billion over the next five years for infrastructure projects. It had also undertaken sector-specific commitments with regard to global health, gender issues, disaster risk reduction and stabilizing the Middle East. More generally, science, technology and innovation were driving forces for achieving a sustainable society.

78. **Mr. Panagaria** (India), Vice-Chairperson of the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog), said that there was a strong correlation between the Sustainable Development Goals and those of the current Indian Government; many of the country's policy programmes were directly reflected in the Goals. One of his Government's highest priorities was the provision of housing, sanitation and clean water and good health care for all, including women and children.

79. His country had taken robust initial steps to create an institutional framework to implement the Goals and was organizing a series of workshops nationally and at the state level towards that end. It was also committed to providing a platform for all stakeholders, including subnational state authorities, civil society organizations, academia, think tanks and the private sector, to achieve greater convergence and efficiency in the follow-up process.

80. When India presented its first voluntary national review in 2017, it would be well on its way to ensuring coordinated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and monitoring progress. In an interdependent world, however, the achievement of the Goals would rely on much more than just the success of individual countries. Joint efforts in the spirit of the global partnership agreed under Goal 17 could bring about a global transformation. Developed countries must take a visible lead in addressing the challenges towards sustainability by rapidly reducing per capita carbon emissions, adopting more sustainable lifestyles, and providing enhanced resources to assist poor countries disproportionately impacted by natural disasters and health pandemics.

81. **Mr. Bizmark** (Islamic Republic of Iran), Director-General for International Environmental Affairs and Sustainable Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said that the high-level political forum was a valued platform for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, examining the challenges that emerged in the process and recommending policy options to ensure strong performance by all relevant stakeholders. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda required more effective international support and solidarity, especially with regard to global economic imbalances. The United Nations must play a coordinating role by strengthening global partnerships for sustainable development. The principles of national ownership and common but differentiated responsibilities must remain the cornerstones of the new agenda, in addition to the three pillars of sustainable development.

82. Despite various challenges and constraints, including unjust and illegal sanctions, Iran had taken significant steps to implement the 2030 Agenda. National priorities had been set for the country's major

goals, including poverty eradication, housing, sustainable water and sanitation management, renewable energy and energy efficiency, combating desertification and deforestation, and disaster risk reduction and management. His Government had adopted two major laws: one on economic resilience that dealt with shocks that could threaten development, and another that promoted a green economy and low-carbon industry with a view to protecting the environment. Success lay in reflecting globally while acting locally.

83. **Mr. Cooper** (New Zealand), Principal Adviser, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, said that the first high-level political forum since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda was a useful stock-taking opportunity. His delegation commended the 22 countries, including its neighbour Samoa, that were providing preliminary reports on their approach to the Sustainable Development Goals. New Zealand, in determining its own process, had set up a cross-governmental inter-agency mechanism for that purpose. While the Goals were indivisible, countries must prioritize them according to their domestic circumstances and needs. New Zealand would contribute to the globally agreed goals through a combination of domestic action and international leadership on global policy issues. The New Zealand Aid Programme would focus on sustainable economic development and complementary investment in education, health, governance and resilience in partner countries.

84. At the global level, New Zealand would continue to play a leadership role, including by eliminating fisheries subsidies that contributed to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and supporting sustainable fishing practices, particularly in the Pacific; eliminating inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies and improving access to renewable energy in the Pacific; promoting an open, rules-based trading system under the World Trade Organization (WTO); and advocating for small island developing States, including by delivering on commitments contained in the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.

85. New Zealand would work with partner countries to support priority targets in the areas where it could be most effective, including at the regional level as a member of the Pacific Islands Forum. The 2030 Agenda could not be achieved through government actions alone: a number of non-governmental organizations and businesses in New Zealand were therefore already engaging productively with government agencies.

86. **Mr. Shide** (Ethiopia), State Minister of Finance and Economic Development, said that that his country had been actively engaged in the Sustainable Development Goals negotiations and was committed to the 2030 Agenda's implementation. Ethiopia had taken ownership of the Goals by integrating them into its five-year national growth and transformation plan, which would serve as a mechanism to overcome the silo-sectoral approach to development. Its initiatives to implement them spanned the three dimensions of the Goals — economic, social and environmental. Ethiopia planned to keep its economy growing at an average rate of 10 per cent and to reduce poverty to 16 per cent by 2020, taking targeted actions to address the needs of those caught in the poverty trap. One key measure taken in 2016 was the localization and mainstreaming of the country's first social protection policy. Ethiopia was also expanding its rural productive social safety net programme to cover over 4.7 million urban poor in the coming decade.

87. His country aimed to attain a carbon-neutral, middle-income industrial economy by 2025. It was focused on ensuring that 80 per cent of its labour force shifted from low-productivity, rain-fed subsistence agriculture to commercial and productive agriculture. The development of the private sector, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises, was at the core of the country's growth policy. A legal framework for public-private partnership would be operational before the end of the year.

88. Under its Climate Resilient Green Economy strategy, a mechanism to ensure a green economy path had been instituted, with an intended nationally determined contribution of 64 per cent reduction from business-as-usual greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. Ethiopia was also working to ensure a coherent and integrated monitoring framework for implementation of the new Agenda. A revitalized global partnership to support national efforts would ensure the Goals were attained by 2030.

89. **Mr. Kamphasa** (Zambia), Permanent Secretary, Cabinet Office, said that as countries were at different development stages, it was important for policymakers to make appropriate choices when implementing the 2030 Agenda. For over a decade, Zambia had been working to carry out its Vision 2030 plan for becoming

a middle-income country with robust economic growth and fewer regional differences. The country's structural composition, characterized by regional differences in resource endowment, had given rise to numerous inequalities, hampering economic diversification and the creation of decent jobs. Consequently, Zambia must regulate natural resource use and carry out climate change mitigation in order to reduce poverty. Through a consultative and integrated approach, his Government was promoting plans anchored on wealth creation, poverty eradication, job creation and the reduction of inequalities. While it was making every effort to promote young entrepreneurs, women-owned businesses and small and medium-sized enterprises, Zambia still needed international assistance, including technology transfer, trade facilitation, the fulfilment of ODA pledges, capacity-building for data collection and analysis, and strengthened monitoring and evaluation systems.

90. **Mr. Županjevac** (Serbia), Ambassador in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said that when it came to the universal and all-encompassing Goals of the 2030 Agenda, failure was not an option: the commitments made in New York, Addis Ababa and Sendai must be fully honoured. The unacceptable number of human beings living in extreme poverty and suffering from hunger, and the number of those who were illiterate must be addressed, leaving no one behind.

91. In December 2015, his Government had set up an interministerial working group to monitor and coordinate implementation, with the participation of civil society, academia and the private sector. As all 17 Goals and 169 targets were interlinked and interdependent, the silo approach must be avoided. The development of statistical indicators to monitor implementation and progress was essential; to that end, his country looked forward to the recommendations and action plan for sustainable development data of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

92. With the United Nations country team, Serbia had concluded a development partnership framework for the period 2016-2020 that was aligned with both the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and accession negotiations with the European Union. The development partnership framework contained five pillars and nine outcomes covering the areas of good governance, rule of law, provision of health and education services, economic growth, job creation, environmental protection, and culture and development.

93. **Ms. Orelope-Adefulire** (Nigeria), Senior Special Assistant to the President on Sustainable Development Goals, said that in order to domesticate and mainstream the Sustainable Development Goals into a national plan, financial as well as non-financial, public as well as private, and international as well as national action would be needed. International assistance for developing countries should be scaled up, especially in the critical area of support for domestic resource mobilization. The means of implementation and multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development, including South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation, must be strengthened in order to ensure that no one was left behind. Nigeria was focusing on advances in science, technology, innovation, accountability and coherence to accelerate attainment of the Goals.

94. For a developing country to be self-reliant, better trade regimes would be crucial, along with fair pricing policies that ensured fair trade and protected natural resources and intellectual property, and more funding to strengthen development gains. Nigeria was focused on economic diversification to generate new revenue.

95. **Mr. Thompson** (Ghana), Director-General of the National Development Planning Commission, said that the 2015 adoption of the 2030 Agenda coincided with a series of medium- and long-term plans which his country was implementing in order to transform Ghana from a lower-middle-income country into a high-income country by 2057. His Government was working with national and subnational authorities to determine the extent to which existing development priorities accorded with the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, and Government officials were being trained to align their sector plans with the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063. The objectives of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 were being localized and adapted to Ghana's long-term national development plans, or were directly adopted in cases where no modification was necessary. National infrastructure plans and reforms were addressing the structural issues of slums, sewage systems, roadways and community recreation facilities, while legislative, policy and institutional reforms would make the Government more efficient and responsive to the needs of the people.

96. **Mr. Belkaid** (Algeria), Deputy Director-General of International Economic and Financial Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said that his Government's action plan for the years 2015-2019 aimed to address the basic needs of the population, including infrastructure development, reduction of territorial disparities, access to drinking water and medicines, and medical and sanitation services. Thanks to a series of Government programmes, extreme poverty in Algeria had been nearly eradicated over the past several years and life expectancy had risen, while efforts in the area of education had resulted in higher enrolment rates, better quality schooling, and a reduction in youth illiteracy, an area in which it would continue to develop new approaches, including through the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs). More than 31 per cent of the Algerian parliament was now female; thus, the country was a leader in the Arab world and beyond with regard to gender equality. A forthcoming and final national report on his country's achievement of the Millennium Development Goals would be made available to United Nations agencies and other bilateral and multilateral partners. To ensure the transition from the MDGs to the Sustainable Development Goals, a national coordination structure had been set up under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Further, a national day dedicated to raising awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals had been organized in March 2016 under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council.

97. Nonetheless, the 2030 Agenda could not be implemented without the political and financial support of the international community, particularly in Africa. Algeria would continue to provide support to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and to engage in South-South and triangular cooperation. It reiterated its appeal to the wealthier countries to meet their ODA commitments and stressed the importance of technology transfers and a renewed global partnership based on genuine reform of global economic governance.

98. **Ms. Al-Nussairy** (Iraq), Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said that great efforts to combat terrorism had not come at the expense of working towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Her Government had improved the quality of life for its people and increased the participation of civil society in all aspects of sustainable development. Institutional reforms had also been introduced in order to bring an end to excessive bureaucratic complexities. The Government had formed a national committee to implement a sustainable development plan formulated by the Ministry of Planning on the basis of input from all geographic areas and social sectors, and was working with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to ensure transparency and fairness in the management of its budget. It had taken steps to empower women economically and socially, including through a plan to implement the recommendations of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security and the establishment of gender units in all ministries. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) had recently added several historical Iraqi cities and endangered natural habitat areas to its list of world heritage sites.

99. Terrorism was destructive not only to the people of Iraq, but also to its infrastructure. Declining oil prices had also taken a toll on revenues and had forced the Government to adopt austerity policies. Another challenge was returning displaced persons to regions previously occupied by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant which had been liberated by the Iraqi Army, the popular mobilization and tribal forces, and the Peshmerga forces. The human and economic cost of the war on terrorism, which Iraq had been fighting on its own behalf as well as that of the international community, was the primary obstacle to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. International support for Iraq needed to be equal to the enormity of that challenge.

100. **Ms. Monnoyer-Smith** (France), Commissioner General for Sustainable Development, said that 2015 had been a turning point: the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda had demonstrated international willpower to work towards a better future for the planet. Each country and actor must determine its own path to achieving common purposes in sustainable development. Her country had been among the first European Union countries to initiate the process of ratification of the Paris Agreement, and would present to the United Nations the following day a report on French initiatives to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. She appealed to all countries to sign and ratify the Paris Agreement, which was integral to the aims of the 2030

Agenda; strengthen intended nationally determined contributions in order to accomplish the aims of both the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement; and support the Lima-Paris Action Agenda. The international community had the responsibility of demonstrating the relevance and effectiveness of multilateralism, and, in collaboration with non-State actors, finding solutions to the great challenges the world faced.

101. **Ms. Frankinet** (Belgium), Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations, said that her country relied on a human rights-based approach in order to reach the most vulnerable in society and ensure that no one was left behind, as called for by the 2030 Agenda. To that end, it would be necessary to eliminate inequalities and use digital technologies to assess gaps. In order to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030, more resources needed to be dedicated to assisting countries that were less developed or in situations of fragility. Belgium had therefore decided to focus half of its official development assistance in 2019 on the least developed countries. All factors had been taken into account: the necessity of inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent work for all; the fact that billions of people relied on marine and coastal biodiversity for their livelihoods; and the recognition that sustainable development would remain out of reach in the absence of peace and stability, the rule of law and good governance. Clearly a comprehensive approach was needed. Her Government was formulating a national sustainable development strategy that would guide the country at all levels towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The strategy would require the full participation of the private sector, non-governmental organizations, academia and other stakeholders, including children and youth. The Government was also working on a national charter for the Sustainable Development Goals and had undertaken several initiatives to raise public awareness of the Goals. In conclusion, she called for an effective and efficient United Nations system with the flexibility to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda around the world.

102. **Ms. Potter** (Seychelles), Permanent Representative of Seychelles to the United Nations, said that although her country was a small island developing State and faced corresponding challenges, it would build on successes of the past and unlock new sources of sustainable growth while ensuring the empowerment of vulnerable groups in society. Developing oceans in a sustainable manner was vital to the well-being of her country's people; the Government would therefore establish a national poverty index to be used in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Seychelles had made tangible contributions which not only furthered efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 14, but also partially made up for decreasing official development assistance to middle-income countries. A national steering committee would be established to ensure coordination and consistency in all aspects of the approach that Seychelles took to sustainable development, and incorporate the principles of Agenda 2063 into the relevant policies and strategies. The international community should use a "vulnerability index" as a reference tool when supporting the development aspirations of such countries as Seychelles and working towards a more equitable world order.

103. **Mr. Amihai-Bivas** (Israel), Ambassador of Israel to the Caribbean Islands, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, said that his country's Ministry for Social Equality had been established to reduce inequalities among sectors of Israeli society and empower vulnerable groups. The particularly important issue of gender equality was being mainstreamed into all aspects of society, and government ministries were required to provide access to decision-making roles and special employment programmes tailored to the needs of Israeli Arab and ultra-orthodox women and single mothers. Israel compensated for its limited natural resources with an abundance of human resources and a vibrant civil society, and had thus managed to solve many development challenges. Engaging youth from all sectors of society by means of early education towards innovation empowered them to go on to create social and economic change in their communities. In fact, Israel had been working on sustainable development for decades with countries around the world, and its International Agency for Development Cooperation (MASHAV) had demonstrated the importance of effective partnerships, in which each party contributed its unique strengths, experiences and expertise.

104. **Mr. Otto** (Palau), Permanent Representative of Palau to the United Nations, said that while countries that had ample resources could mount multiple

initiatives to address several or all of the Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets, smaller countries such as Palau were unable to do the same. However, his country had passed the Palau National Marine Sanctuary Act in October 2015, protecting 80 per cent of its exclusive economic zone from exploitation. Thus a single initiative addressed several of the Sustainable Development Goals at the same time. Founded on traditional conservation practices and aided by modern science, the National Marine Sanctuary would provide many benefits, such as enhanced reef resilience, ocean restoration, rejuvenation of biodiversity and replenishment of fish stocks. Palau's environment was integral to its economy. Clearly, the Sanctuary would enable the country to re-establish a domestic fishing industry that would provide employment, food security and good health to people and local businesses, while also adding value to the rapidly growing tourism industry. In fact, recent ocean-based economic growth, primarily in tourism, had allowed the country to approach full employment, increase minimum wages, expand health and social insurance protections for all, increase investment in health services, and improve the quality of education, especially in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

105. The National Marine Sanctuary would strengthen Palau's efforts to achieve Goals 1, 3, 4, 8 and 10. It would also establish a resource base for core domestic funding, which would ultimately lead to other initiatives to address even more of the Sustainable Development Goals. In that way, Palau had set an example that other countries with limited resources could emulate.

106. **Ms. Sall-Beye** (International Telecommunication Union) said that almost everyone at United Nations Headquarters and in New York routinely used the Internet and benefited from the wealth of information it contained. At the same time, more than 3.5 billion people around the world were still completely unconnected from that information. A mere 10 per cent of people in least developed countries were now online, and at current rates of progress, only 20 per cent would be online by 2020. Access to, and use of, information and communications technologies were crucial to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The international community needed to do much more to address the issue of connectivity and ensure that hospitals were connected to patients, schools to students, and Governments to the people they served.

107. **Mr. Fangbedji** (International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions) said that the success of the Sustainable Development Goals depended on countries rethinking their development policies and formulating efficient platforms for follow-up and implementation. Economic and social councils and similar institutions should play a primary role in combating corruption, promoting good governance in development, finding and pooling resources through bilateral and multilateral partners, promoting dialogue among institutions, and strengthening national institutes of statistics and economic analysis.

The meeting rose at 9 p.m.